

Bat researcher enjoys a different kind of night life

Paul White (B.S. 2004) has a job that keeps him up all hours of the night. He's a research technician studying bats for WI DNR. Since bats are active at night, that's when Paul is on the job, too. In the past year Paul has been monitoring bats across the state to learn more about the timing of their nightly activity, phenology, migration events, and which species inhabit the state. He works under the supervision of another UW-Madison wildlife ecology alumnus, David Redell (B.S. 1999, M.S. 2005). Paul says that lately they have been training volunteers statewide to conduct bat surveys. They are also building an acoustic reference library by trapping bats and recording their calls. "I enjoy working at night whether we are capturing bats or conducting surveys," says Paul. "For the most part, human activity is at a minimum and the wildlife activity is at its prime."

Paul's credits his student involvement in a white-tailed deer project studying chronic wasting disease for providing him knowledge of proper scientific protocols. "I also learned the importance of being able to work in a group-type environment as well as working independently," says Paul. He says many of his UW-Madison experiences helped prepare him for his current position but says those with an outdoor component were especially helpful for him, such as ornithology and the summer practicum.

Paul suggests students try new experiences by volunteering on difference projects or activities, even if



Paul White examines a northern long-eared myotis bat.

Photo by Wisconsin DNR

it's only for a short period of time. "You figure out quickly those activities you enjoy participating in versus the projects that feel more like work and less like fun." Paul also highlights the importance of social networking. "Everyone is different, but I found that it's more who you know than what you know when landing a job. Keep in touch with fellow students and teachers. They will provide guidance and opportunities for a variety of wildlife related positions."